

IN THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) An ink supply system, comprising:

an ink supply means which supplies ink in an ink container to an ink fountain where the ink is temporarily stored between a first point in time when the ink is discharged from the ink container and a second point in time when the ink is supplied to an inner peripheral surface of a printing drum;

an ink amount detecting means which outputs an ink supply starting signal when the amount of ink in the ink fountain supplied by the ink supply means becomes smaller than a predetermined first threshold value and an ink supply terminating signal when the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes not smaller than a predetermined second threshold value;

a time measuring means which measures an elapsed time from the time the ink supply starting signal is output from the ink amount detecting means;

an empty ink container recognizing means which recognizes that the ink container is exhausted when the elapsed time measured by the time measuring means becomes longer than a predetermined inkless time before the ink supply terminating signal is output; and

an ink supply control means which starts the ink supply means supplying the ink in response to the ink supply starting signal and stops the ink supply means from supplying the ink in response to the ink supply terminating signal,

wherein the improvement comprises that the empty ink container recognizing means reads out numeric information from a storage means which is provided on the ink container to store numeric information for setting an inkless time corresponding to the kind of ink in the ink container, and sets the inkless time on the basis of the numeric information.

8. (Previously Presented) An ink supply system, comprising:

an ink supply means which supplies ink in an ink container to an ink fountain where the ink is temporarily stored between a first point in time when the ink is discharged from an ink container and a second point in time when the ink is supplied to an inner peripheral surface of a printing drum,

an ink amount detecting means which outputs an ink supply starting signal when the amount of ink in the ink fountain supplied by the ink supply means becomes smaller than a predetermined first threshold value and an ink supply terminating signal when the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes not smaller than a predetermined second threshold value,

a time measuring means which measures the elapsed time from the time the ink supply starting signal is output from the ink amount detecting means,

an empty ink container recognizing means which recognizes that the ink container is exhausted when the elapsed time measured by the time measuring means becomes longer than a predetermined inkless time before the ink supply terminating signal is output, and

an ink supply control means which starts the ink supply means supplying the ink in response to the ink supply starting signal and stops the ink supply means from supplying the ink in response to the ink supply terminating signal,

wherein the improvement comprises that the empty ink container recognizing means reads out a parameter from a storage means which is provided on the ink container to store a parameter representing an inkless time corresponding to the kind of ink in the ink container, and sets the inkless time on the basis of the parameter, and

wherein the ink supply system further comprises a ceasing time measuring means which measures a ceasing time from interruption of the action of the printing drum and resumption of the same,

wherein the parameter stored in the storage means represents an inkless time corresponding to the ceasing time and the kind of ink in the ink container, and

the empty ink container recognizing means sets the inkless time on the basis of the parameter.

9. (Previously Presented) An ink supply system as defined in claim 7 in which the kind of ink represents the viscosity of the ink.

10. (Previously Presented) An ink supply system as defined in claim 8 in which the kind of ink represents the viscosity of the ink.

11. (Currently Amended) An ink container in combination with an ink storage device which is used for carrying out an ink supply method where supply of ink from an ink container to an ink fountain where the ink is temporarily stored between a first point in time when the ink is discharged from an ink container and a second point in time when the ink is supplied to the inner peripheral surface of a printing drum is started when the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes smaller than a first threshold value and is terminated when the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes not smaller than a second threshold value after the supply of ink is started, the elapsed time from the start of the supply of ink is measured, it is recognized that the ink container is exhausted when the measured elapsed time from the start of the supply

of ink becomes longer than a predetermined inkless time before the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes not smaller than the second threshold value after the supply of ink is started, a numeric information is read out from a ~~the separate storage means device~~ which is provided on the ink container to store a numeric information for setting an inkless time corresponding to the kind of ink in the ink container, and the inkless time is set on the basis of the numeric information, comprising a ~~the storage means device provided on the ink container~~ which stores the numeric information for setting an inkless time corresponding to the kind of ink therein.

12. (Previously Presented) An ink container as defined in Claim 11 in which the kind of ink represents the viscosity of the ink.

13. (Previously Presented) An ink container which is used for carrying out an ink supply method where supply of ink from an ink container to an ink fountain where the ink is temporarily stored between a first point in time when the ink is discharged from an ink container and a second point in time when the ink is supplied to the inner peripheral surface of a printing drum is started when the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes smaller than a first threshold value and is terminated when the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes not smaller than a second threshold value after the supply of ink is started, the elapsed time from the start of the supply of ink is measured, it is recognized that the ink container is exhausted when the measured elapsed time from the start of the supply of ink becomes longer than a predetermined inkless time before the amount of ink in the ink fountain becomes not smaller than the second threshold value after the supply of ink is started, a ceasing time from interruption of printing to resumption of the printing is measured, a parameter corresponding to the measured ceasing time is read out

from a storage means which is provided on the ink container to store a parameter representing an inkless time corresponding to the kind of ink in the ink container and the ceasing time, and the inkless time is set on the basis of the parameter, comprising a storage means which stores a parameter representing an inkless time corresponding to the ceasing time and the kind of ink in the ink container.

14. (Previously Presented) An ink container as defined in Claim 13 in which the kind of ink represents the viscosity of the ink.